

Planning and Development Department  
Land Use Planning Division

## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND SCOPING SESSIONS FOR THE PROPOSED 1900 FOURTH STREET PROJECT**

The City of Berkeley is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project identified below. An Initial Study checklist is also being prepared and will be released with the Draft EIR. Project plans and other information are available at the City of Berkeley Planning and Development Department, Land Use Planning Division, 2120 Milvia Street, Berkeley, California or online at:

[https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Planning\\_and\\_Development/Zoning\\_Adjustment\\_Board/1900\\_Fourth.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Planning_and_Development/Zoning_Adjustment_Board/1900_Fourth.aspx)

The City of Berkeley, as the Lead Agency for the Project, invites you to comment on the proposed scope of the Draft EIR. Please direct comments on this NOP to: *Shannon Allen, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Department, Land Use Planning Division, 2120 Milvia Street, Berkeley, California 94704; or ShAllen@ci.berkeley.ca.us*. Comments on the NOP must be received **on or before March 14, 2016**. In addition, comments may be provided at the EIR Scoping Meetings (see below). Comments should focus on discussing possible impacts on the physical environment, ways in which potential adverse effects might be minimized, and alternatives to the Project in light of the EIR's purpose to provide useful and accurate information about such factors.

**EIR PUBLIC SCOPING:** The City of Berkeley will conduct two public scoping sessions:

The **Landmarks Preservation Commission** will conduct a public scoping session on **March 3, 2016, starting at 7:00 p.m. at the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue** to receive comments related to the review of historic and archaeological resources.

The **Zoning Adjustments Board** will conduct a public scoping session on **March 10, 2016, starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, 2nd Floor** to receive comments on all aspects of the Project's environmental review.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The project site is located within the Fourth Street shopping area of West Berkeley and occupies the block surrounded by Hearst Avenue to the north, Fourth Street to the east, University Avenue to the south, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the west. The site is immediately bordered to the west by the Berkeley Amtrak Station platform and is accessible by several bus lines operated by Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit). Regional vehicular access is provided by Interstate 80 (I-80) and I-580, access to which is provided approximately two blocks west of the site.

The project site is comprised of two contiguous parcels, including: 1) 1900 Fourth Street, assessor's parcel number (APN) 057-2101-001 and 2) 701 University Street, APN 057-2101-005. Local access to the site is provided by University Avenue and Fourth Street.

Figure 1 (attached) provides a map of the site's regional and local location.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The project site is located within the Fourth Street commercial shopping district, which is characterized by high levels of pedestrian traffic and a mix of low- and mid-rise structures. Land uses along the Fourth Street corridor immediately north and east of the site primarily include retail and restaurant uses. Immediately south of the site, land uses along Fourth Street consist of mixed-use residential with ground floor retail and mixed-use with office above retail. Beyond the UPRR tracks west of the site, land uses consist of mixed-use/light industrial use, including a lumber yard.

The approximately 2.21-acre, generally-level project site consists of an approximately 350-space privately-owned surface parking lot that is open to the public for a fee and an approximately 900 square-foot one-story commercial building that is currently occupied by a private fitness facility. The site is currently surrounded by a chain link and metal fencing and wooden bollards and vegetation on the site is limited to a few trees and scattered shrubs at the perimeter. Vehicular access to the parking lot is provided by two separate one-way driveways located on Fourth Street.

The site is designated Avenue Commercial with a Development Node overlay in the Berkeley General Plan and is within the West Berkeley Commercial (C-W) zoning district. The project site is also part of a group of several properties designated by the City of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Commission as a Landmark site, for its location within the potential boundaries of the West Berkeley Shellmound.

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** West Berkeley Investors, LLC, c/o Rhoades Planning Group, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 200, Oakland, CA 94612

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The proposed Project would redevelop the site with a mix of residential and commercial uses totaling 207,590 gross square feet, as well as associated parking and circulation, open space and landscaping, and utility improvements. The proposed uses would be located within two separate buildings, a three story building at the corner of Fourth Street and Hearst Avenue, and a one- to five-story building on the balance of the site. Building heights along Fourth Street would be lower and stepback from the street frontage, while the five-story building components would be concentrated at the interior of the site and along the UPRR and University Avenue frontages.

Approximately 118,370 square feet of residential uses (135 dwelling units) would be located on the second level and above, and would average 764 square feet in size, with a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom units. Residential amenity space would be distributed throughout the first and second levels and would consist of approximately 56,140 gross square feet of lobby areas, a leasing office, a fitness center, a common lounge and associated residential support and infrastructure space. Commercial uses would total approximately 33,080 gross square feet, including approximately 18,230 gross square feet of retail uses and 14,850 gross square feet of restaurant uses. Between 10 and 15 commercial tenants are anticipated to occupy the ground level, with an average floor space of between 1,500 and 3,000 square feet.

A total of approximately 16,090 square feet of open space would be provided at the ground and second-story podium levels. Private residential open space would consist of private balconies and common courtyard areas, totaling approximately 9,281 square feet. A public pathway, or "paseo," at the ground level would provide access to the interior of the site and between Fourth Street and Hearst Avenue. Street trees would be planted along Fourth Street and the University Avenue frontage.

Included in the mixed-use Project would be a five-story, approximately 148,200 gross square-foot parking garage, located at the southwest corner of the site. A total of 372 parking spaces would be provided, with the ground and second level spaces dedicated to public and guest parking and the third level and above dedicated to residential parking. Bicycle parking spaces would also be located within the garage. Vehicular access to the parking garage would be provided via Fourth Street and Hearst Avenue.

Figure 2 depicts the ground level site plan for the proposed Project. Figures 3a and 3b depict the conceptual building elevations as seen from the north, east, south, and west frontages. All figures are included as attachments to this document.

**REQUESTED APPROVALS:** The proposed Project is subject to approvals by the City of Berkeley's Zoning Adjustments Board and the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Project would require the following discretionary entitlements from the City of Berkeley, per the City of Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC):

- Structural Alteration Permit (SAP), per BMC Section 3.24.260 to allow construction activities with the potential to affect a designated City of Berkeley Landmark site that is part of a group of several properties designated for their location within the potential boundaries of the West Berkeley Shellmound. The SAP will be referred to the Design Review Committee (DRC) for Preliminary Design Review (PDR) recommendation to ZAB and Final Design Review (FDR) of the Project.
- Demolition Permit, per BMC Section 22.12.060 to allow demolition of the existing commercial building.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow new retail sales uses greater than 7,500 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow a quick or full service restaurant use.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow a mixed-use development over 20,000 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.050.B.1 to allow creation of floor area greater than 5,000 square feet.
- Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.060.A to allow restaurant operation from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Administrative Use Permit, per BMC Section 23E.64.030.A to allow alcoholic beverage service of beer and wine incidental to food service.

The project applicant is also requesting a Density Bonus with related waivers and modifications to development standards pursuant to Government Code Section 65915(b)(1)(B) and (f)(2).

**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:** Based on site-specific characteristics and City standard conditions of approval, the Project is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the CEQA issue topics listed below. It is anticipated that these issue topics will be analyzed in an Initial Study checklist, which will be included as an appendix to the Draft EIR.

- Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources (historic and paleontological resources)
- Geology and Soils

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Based on site-specific characteristics and preliminary analysis, the Project may result in significant impacts on the CEQA issue topics listed below. It is anticipated that these topics will be analyzed in the Draft EIR.

- **Air Quality.** The project site is located within close proximity to residential uses, it is also in close proximity to a high-volume freeway and active rail corridor. In the absence of adequate mitigation, during both the construction and operation phase of the Project, there is a potential for the Project to violate air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Additionally, there is the potential for the Project to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a critical pollutant for which the project area is in non-attainment under applicable federal and State ambient air quality standards (including releasing emissions, which exceed quantitative standards for ozone precursors or other pollutants). In addition, in the absence of adequate mitigation, the Project could have the potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- **Cultural Resources (Archaeological Resources).** The proposed Project would involve demolition, subsurface excavation, and construction activities on portions of the site that are designated as a City of Berkeley Landmark, due to its location within the potential boundaries of the West Berkeley Shellmound. The potential for the proposed Project to disturb subsurface archaeological deposits and result in impacts to both known and unknown cultural resources within and in the vicinity of the site is anticipated to be analyzed in the Draft EIR.
- **Noise and Vibration.** The project site is located within close proximity to residential uses; it is also in close proximity to a high-volume freeway and active rail corridor. During both the construction and operation phases the Project could expose persons to excessive noise and/or groundborne vibration levels, resulting in potential conflicts with established noise thresholds. The potential for the Project to permanently or temporarily increase noise and/or vibration levels is anticipated to be analyzed in the Draft EIR.
- **Transportation and Traffic.** Due to the intensification of land uses on the project site, the proposed Project would have the potential to conflict with applicable plans, ordinances, and/or policies establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways, and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit. There is also the potential for the Project to conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other

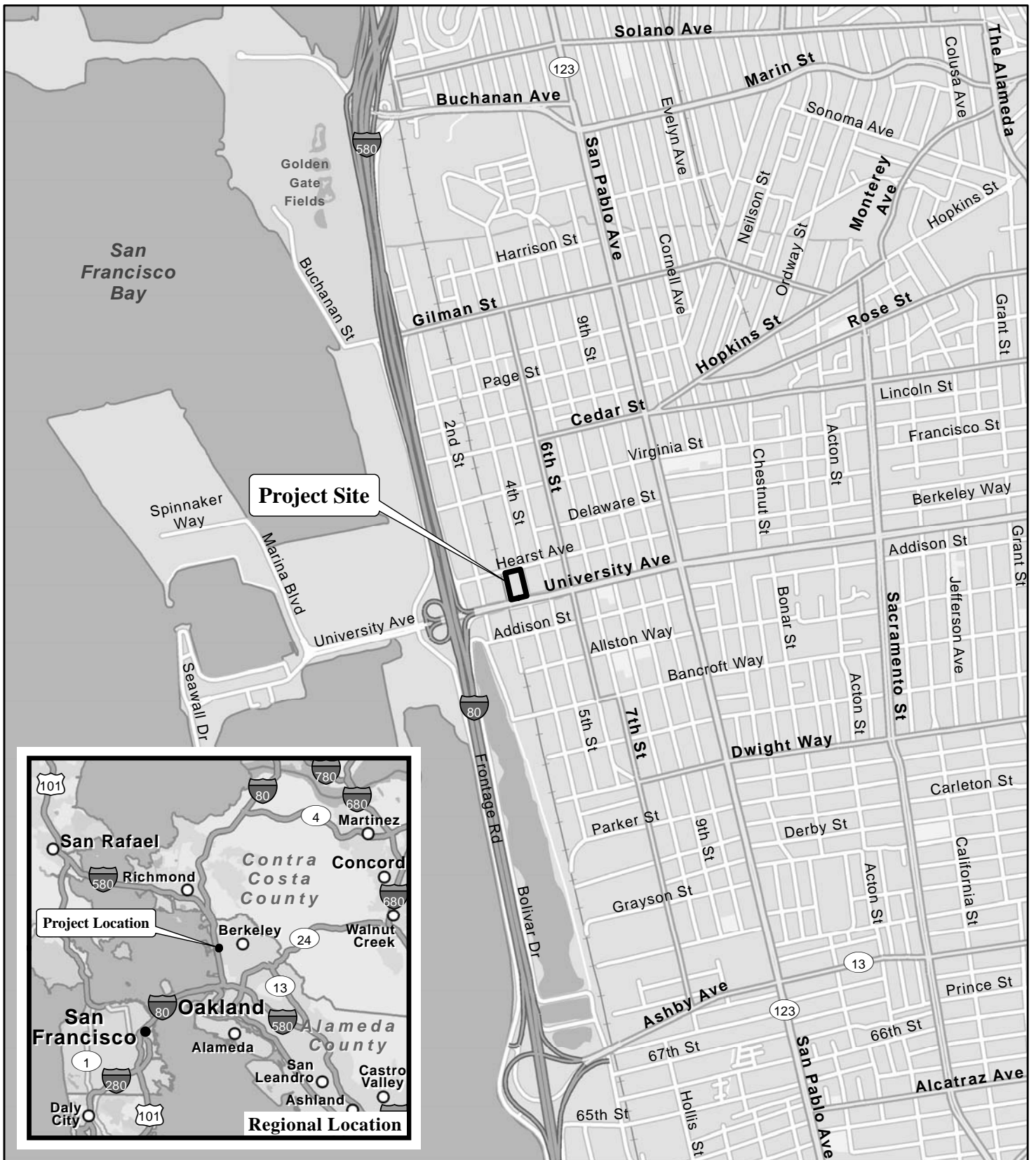
standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways. The Project could also have the potential to substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses. The Project's potential to result in inadequate emergency access is also anticipated to be analyzed. Finally, the Project could conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance of these facilities and these potential conflicts are also anticipated to be discussed in the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR will also examine a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative and other potential alternatives that may be capable of reducing or avoiding potential environmental effects.

Shannon Allen, Principal Planner

Date of Distribution: February 10, 2016

Attachments: Figure 1: Project Location and Regional Vicinity Map  
Figure 2: Conceptual Ground Level Site Plan  
Figure 3a: Conceptual Building Elevations  
Figure 3b: Conceptual Building Elevations



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FIGURE 1



1900 Fourth Street Project NOP

Project Location and Regional Vicinity Map

SOURCE: ESRI STREETMAP NORTH AMERICA (2012).

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- LEGEND**
- Restaurant / Retail
  - Parking / Operations
  - Circulation & Retail Servicing
  - Amenities & Public Program
  - Exit Stairs & Elevators

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FIGURE 2



SOURCES: TCA ARCHITECTS; WEST BERKELEY INVESTORS, LLC, MAY 2015.

1900 Fourth Street Project NOP  
Conceptual Ground Level Site Plan





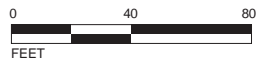
North Elevation - Hearst Avenue



East Elevation - Fourth Street

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FIGURE 3a



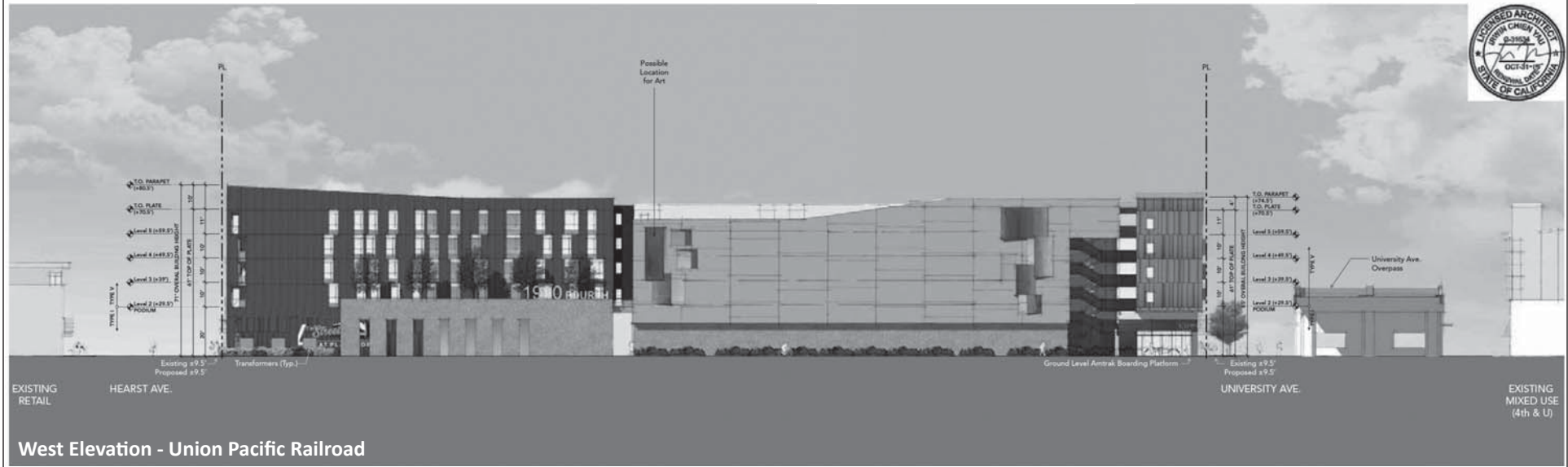
SOURCES: TCA ARCHITECTS; WEST BERKELEY INVESTORS, LLC, MAY 2015.

1900 Fourth Street Project NOP  
Conceptual Building Elevations





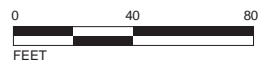
South Elevation - University Avenue



West Elevation - Union Pacific Railroad

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FIGURE 3b



SOURCES: TCA ARCHITECTS; WEST BERKELEY INVESTORS, LLC, MAY 2015.

1900 Fourth Street Project NOP  
Conceptual Building Elevations